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A Rose by any other name...

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Retrieved on 28th October 2021 from www.anarkismo.net

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The Bush Junta has admitted that it will negotiate with Iraqi insurgents. This has caused some issues of language in an attempt to justify the new line. After all, Bush argued back in 2002 that **“no nation can negotiate with terrorists. For there is no way to make peace with those whose only goal is death.”**

Hence the need to change the language used (and, ironically, to one used by many anti-war protestors and attacked by the pro-war people). In Iraq, “Terrorists and insurgents” were one and the same, grouped together as the “anti-Iraqi” forces by those occupying Iraq and responsible for tens of thousands of dead Iraqis. Given this the new policy is, on the face of it, a total flip-flop.

Donald Rumsfeld started the ball rolling by stressing the difference between the Sunni *insurgents* and the foreign *terrorists* by stating that no negotiations are taking place with hardened terrorist elements belonging to al-Qaida or those, as he put it, *“with blood on their hands.”* Which, surely, excludes an insurgency which is attacking and killing US troops?

Rumsfeld was at pains to state that such contacts go “go on all the time and where the policy of the Iraqis “a sovereign government” which “decide[s] what their relationships with various elements of insurgents will be. We facilitate those [relationships] from time to time.” Which came as news to the Iraqi Prime Minister, who denied any knowledge of such meetings.

In the coming months we will be hearing a lot more of this distinction as the Bush Junta tries to get itself out of the hole it has dug for itself. Yet this is not the first time the Junta has redefined who the enemy is. The original position, back in the old “Mission Accomplished” days, was that the insurgency was made up of “former regime elements.” Foreign terrorists were rarely mentioned and came to the fore when the stupidity of labelling a home-grown movement “anti-Iraq” was clear. It also has the advantage of allowing Bush and Blair to link the war in Iraq to Al Qaeda. Bush, for one, keeps insisting that America is at war because it was attacked. Yes, but not by Saddam’s Iraq!

So if Iraq is, as Bush claims, “*the latest battlefield in the war against terrorism*” it is only because of his efforts. Back in 2003, Bush could justify the war by saying that “*a free Iraq will no longer serve as a haven for terrorists or as a place for terrorists to get money or arms.*” Today, the CIA is reporting that Iraq is now the training ground for a whole new generation of Islamic terrorists. Indeed, that Iraq is a better training ground than Afghanistan was. But, then again, Bush also said that the torture rooms and mass graves had been closed in Iraq before, of course, opening new ones and killing thousands of Iraqis.

Given that Bush states that the US is winning, why is his military negotiating with those on the way out? But then Rumsfeld did say the insurgency could last 12 years. Which suggests that the Junta knows things are bad. It, after all, made the first move in opening negotiations, not the insurgents. This is far more a sign of “weakness” than bowing to the will of the Iraqi people and setting a timetable for withdrawal. And this is recognised by the insurgents,

As usual, the working class make the sacrifices necessary to pay for the rich's wars.

Now much longer will they do so is the most important question today.

one of whose commander's said that *"it looks like the Americans are in big trouble in Iraq and are desperate to find a way out. Why else would they have rounds of negotiations with people they label as terrorists?"*

Ultimately, Bush is saying that America must stay in Iraq because of the mess it has made. Yet staying in Iraq is causing more mess and more resistance, so America must stay there because it is there. In essence, Bush is asking Americans to support the war because he and his cronies broke it and they now had to fix it. Quite incredible. People are dying because of the incompetents and ideologies they let rule them.

Bush did go on television to explain his policies (or lack of them). He had few options but to excuse his mess in Iraq in terms of 9/11. In his speech to an increasingly hostile public, he mentioned it five times (weapons of mass destruction were not mentioned once). The media reported that the only time Bush got applause from his military audience was in the middle of his speech when a White House advance team member started clapping all on their own in order to cajole the soldiers into clapping, which they dutifully did. Even the applause was fake!

As for the speech, Bush had nothing new to say, wrapping himself in the flag, the military and 9/11 in order to do so (as is well know, when things go bad for Bush, he immediately runs and hides behind 9/11). The fact that Bush resorted to his tired mantra of 9/11 and the discredited notion that there was an Al-Qaeda/Saddam connection shows his level of desperation. Luckily, beyond his true believers, the American public is not buying it.

What he did say was mostly inaccurate. Bush, of course, stressed that hundreds of "foreign fighters" have been killed in Iraq. Yet "foreign fighters" make up a small percentage of the insurgency (under 10%). Most of the rest are Iraqi Sunni Arabs who hate their country being occupied. To suggest otherwise is to lie to the public. Needless to say, Bush does not ponder how many of the "foreign fighters" in Iraq are there precisely because Bush invaded and oc-

cupied a Muslim country. That the terrorism in Iraq is due to other “foreign fighters” being there, who number in their tens of thousands (with over 1700 killed), goes unmentioned.

Bush attacked the terrorists, who to *“achieve the[ir] aims ... have continued to kill: in Madrid, Istanbul, Jakarta, Casablanca, Riyadh, Bali and elsewhere.”* These were all al-Qaeda operations and Bush still has not caught Bin Laden or al-Zawahiri. Ignoring this inconvenient fact, he argued that the *“only way our enemies can succeed is if we forget the lessons of September 11 ... if we abandon the Iraqi people to men like Zarqawi ... and if we yield the future of the Middle East to men like Bin Laden.”* Yet Bush himself ignored several changes to kill al-Zarqawi before the war. US military officials insisted their case for attacking Zarqawi’s operation was airtight, but the Bush Junta feared destroying the terrorist camp in Iraq could undercut its case for war against Saddam. That camp, incidentally, in the US-UK air patrolled section of the country, i.e. it was outside of the area under Saddam’s control. So people are being killed in Iraq so that Bush could bolster his case to invade Iraq (and kill lots of people in Iraq in the process).

Forgetting that the war was meant to be about saving the world’s number one superpower from the threat of Saddam’s impoverished Iraq, he justified it in terms of defeating the terrorists abroad before they attack us at home and of spreading freedom in the Middle East, so that the terrorists lose their support. This is unsurprising as the Bush Junta lied about WMD — they were always a means to an end (as can be seen from the invasion not including a plan to secure the weapons that Saddam was ostensibly about to share with “Al Qaeda”).

As for democracy aboard, the example of Uzbekistan exposes this as the nonsense it always was. US foreign policy has not changed, just the rhetoric it uses to justify its aggression. As for the mantra that America had to deal with terrorism abroad or deal with it at home later, this is incredulous. The insurgents in Iraq were not plotting terrorist attacks against the US in 2003. By decid-

ing to invade Iraq and then messing it up in an attempt to secure the imperial interests of the American ruling class, Bush and his cronies have **created** the terrorism they are now bemoaning. And it makes you wonder how the Iraqis feel knowing that Bush has (apparently deliberately?) turned their country into a magnet for terrorists and so that they get to be killed rather than US citizens?

Bush tries to excuse his utter failure by saying that *“Iraq is the latest battlefield in this war”* (against terror). Yet the Iraq war was created by himself and his neo-con advisors. Before the invasion, he said the rationale for war was to prevent *“a terrorist network with Iraq as an arsenal and as a training ground.”* Today, the CIA is reporting that Iraq is proving to be an even more effective training ground for Islamic extremists than Afghanistan was in Al Qaeda’s early days, because it is serving as a real-world laboratory for urban combat.

He did come out with a real humdinger: *“To complete the mission, we will prevent al-Qaida and other foreign terrorists from turning Iraq into what Afghanistan was under the Taliban — a safe haven from which they could launch attacks on America and our friends.”*

Now, after the Taliban had been defeated in Afghanistan rather than ensure victory there, Bush turned his sights on Iraq (as intended long before 9/11). This allowed Osama bin Laden to escape and the Taliban to reform. Saddam’s regime had no connection with 9/11 nor was not a recruiting sergeant or training ground for Islamic terrorists. Thanks to Bush, it now it is. And so “Mission Accomplished” will be to prevent Iraq becoming like Taliban Afghanistan — which was not an option before he invaded! And who supported the Taliban in the first place? Why, America!

Bush said that the American people have to make sacrifices. Unless you are rich, of course, then you get a hefty tax cut and reap the dividends in your investments in Halliburton and the like. Meanwhile, an attempt to get pro-war people (particularly young Republicans) to enlist has meet with no success. They are just too busy to volunteer to fight the war of choice they wanted and advocated.